

Making French nervous once more

Of Belarus' five defeats so far in the qualification round of the World Championship, the second defeat (2:4) by the French raises at least some light in the darkness, due to our undeniable good play

By Igor Leshin

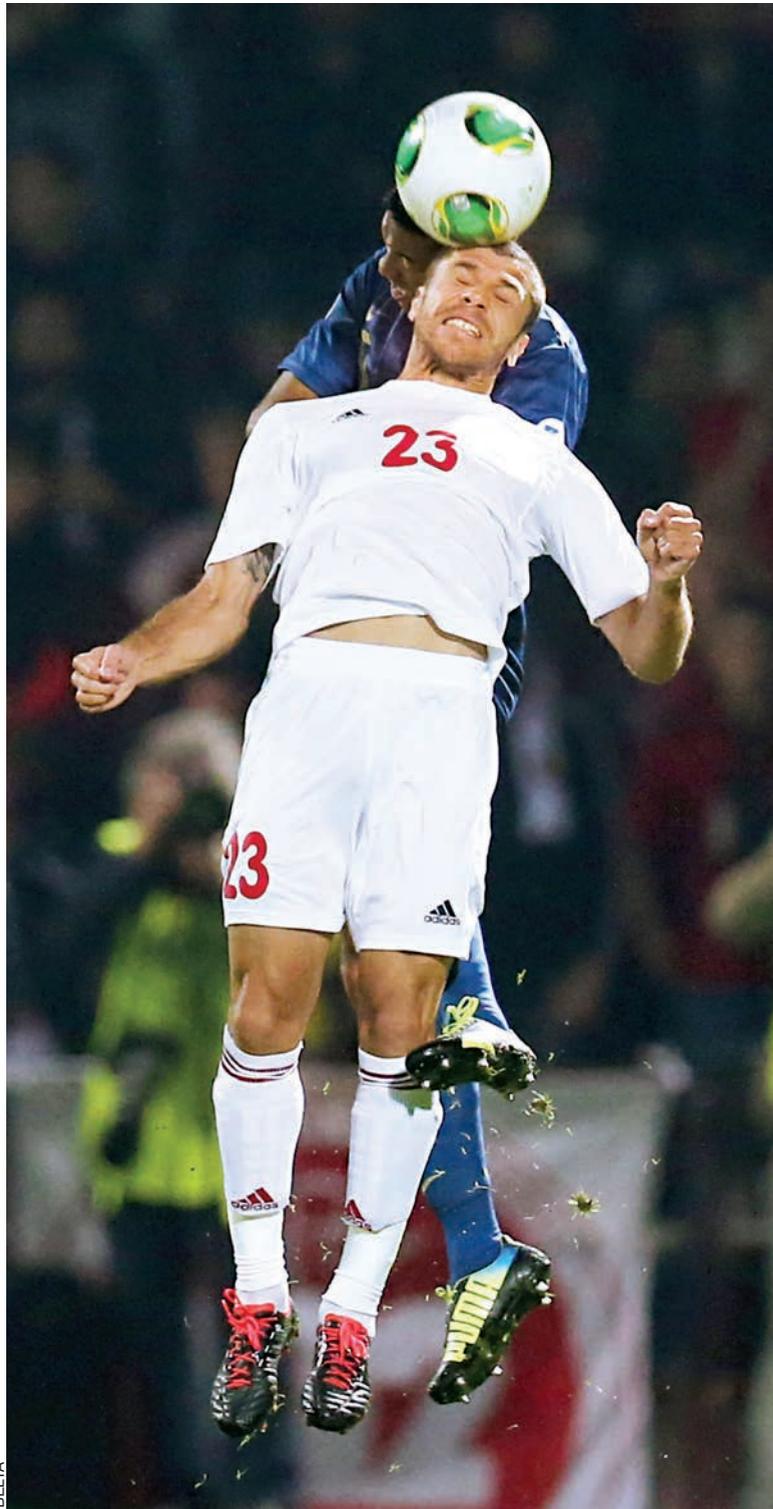
Georgy Kondratiev's squad were on form for the first half, clearly fulfilling their coach's instructions. They were reliable in defence, preventing French attacker Franck Ribéry from scoring, and even managed several dangerous attacks — thanks to Alexander Hleb, Timofey Kalachev and Anton Putilo. One corner kick led to central defender Yegor Filipenko sending the ball into Hugo Lloris' net.

In the second half, the French took the initiative, leading to the score being equalised by Franck Ribéry, following the award of a penalty kick. Belarus, however,

scored ten minutes later: Kalachev netted the ball from a distance, bringing the score to 2:1.

This was the last goal for Belarus, as the team seemed to lose concentration and conceded three goals, some due to goalie Sergey Veremko's mistakes.

After the game, Mr. Kondratiev noted that he was pleased with aspects of his team's play, but that ridiculous defence mistakes in the second half had let down the side. He stressed that captain Sergey Veremko did not play his best game and nor did the goalkeeper. Belarus will play its final game in this qualifying round on October 11th: an away match in Spain.



Despite fighting hard, national football team loses to French

Auroch mascot design awarded

By Yan Zhur

Stas Rabunsky and Kirill Kulikov, from Vitebsk, win first tickets to 2014 World Ice Hockey Championship — to be held in Minsk — for their mascot design of auroch Volat

The winners were recently announced at the 3D Drawing Festival, held in the capital's Gorky Park. The pair drew aurochs in the uniforms of seven of the participating teams: Russia, Canada, Finland, Sweden, the USA, Switzerland and Slovakia (excepting the Czech Republic but including an auroch in the Belarusian team uniform).

Each picture is truly original: the Swedish Volat resembles a lion fond of power lifting, while the Canadian Volat has a super-hero costume and is chasing a thief. Vladimir Kopat — a jury member and an Olympic hero of Salt Lake City — comments, "The Canadians are known as hockey 'fathers', viewing other teams wishing to seize the champion's cup as a thief." The Russian auroch looks extremely fierce; of course, Zinetula Bilyaletdinov would never have looked at his trainees in such a way. It's hard to explain why the American player resembles a farmer but the Belarusian Volat is depicted as a goal keeper — perhaps indicating that our team is expected to mostly be defending its goal rather than attacking!

Piotr Ryabukhin, from the World Championship Directorate, tells us, "Tickets to the tournament are now being printed; we had to wait for the match schedule to be agreed of course. They'll go on sale in early October."

Nadezhda Skardino: not limited by past achievements

By Igor Grishin

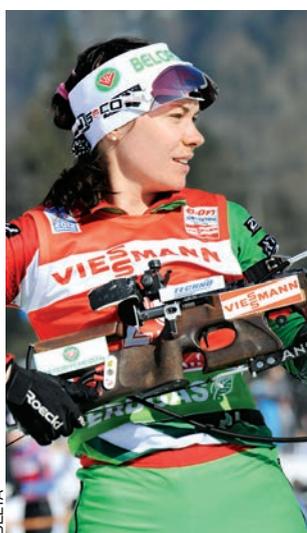
We can learn an important quality from one of the most cheerful girls on the national biathlon team: never give up — regardless of difficulties. Keep fighting... and smiling

The low season is no time for rest — especially in an Olympic year. Do you feel that summer training influences winter results?

I feel this way before each new season. After all, your results in winter depend on training in summer. However, during an Olympic year, you are more responsible. You prepare for it for four years. The Olympic Games represent the most important event for an athlete.

Are you nervous?

Not yet. Everything has its time. We train to a standard regime. During the low season, we go to new places to train, which is interesting! We've been to Kazakhstan



Nadezhda Skardino

(she says smiling) — it was a good opportunity.

Last season was good for you, producing the best results of your career. After your third place at the World Cup in Pokljuka, fans are pinning all their Olympic hopes on you ...

I think that each biathlete on our national team is expected to win an Olympic medal — regardless of past performance. It's true that

all athletes should set the highest goals for themselves. You'd never win otherwise. Fans already write that they are expecting medals from me, which is nice.

In the past, I've had the chance to claim a World Cup win. At the World Championship in 2011, in Khanty-Mansiysk, in the individual race, I came fourth. Certainly, I realised that I was capable of doing more. If I managed not to miss any shots, skied well and kept in good health, I'd achieve a good result.

So you aspire to success?

Yes! If you don't aspire to win, why bother to train! I'm not limited by my past achievements; the possibilities are endless so I hope to improve my results.

Last season, you were among the best biathlete markswomen. Are you still on form?

Anything can happen in training (smiles) and we all have bad days. I can't boast

of never missing the target and nor can any other biathlete. When I miss, I do worry but I set my heart on my goal and try to correct my mistakes. I really try to do my best. This year, I decided to put more emphasis on speedier shooting as I realised that I lagged behind my competitors in this area by about ten seconds. I will try to combine accuracy and speed; I very much hope that I can manage it. If other biathletes can shoot quickly and precisely why can't I do the same? I'm working on this. Watch and see!

So you plan to do your ultimate best in February, during the Olympic Games in Sochi.

Yes. My trainers are going to slightly alter my training in preparation for the Olympic Games in 2014. I hope that we'll be successful. I very much want to show good results — not just at the beginning of the season but at the moment when they are most needed.

In anticipation of major football

Belarusian Football Federation submits application to UEFA to host Euro-2020 final round in Minsk

For the application, a new 33,000 capacity National Football Stadium is to be built on the site of the current Traktor Stadium, in Minsk. The Belarusian Football Federation would like to host four UEFA Euro-2020 matches:

three group stage games and one of the 1/8 final matches. UEFA will be considering applications until September 20th and will then announce which countries will continue to take part in the contest. If Belarus' bid is approved, the Belarusian Football Federation will prepare a full package of documents for UEFA consideration. UEFA will unveil 13 host cities for Euro-2020 in September 2014.

Two finals in Tashkent

Belarusian tennis player Olga Govortsova fails to win Tashkent tournament, after playing two finals back to back

Ranked 113th by the WTA, the Belarusian lost the women's singles final to Serbian Bojana Jovanovski (seeded 58th) after a tie-break in the third and final set — 6:4, 5:7, 6:7 (3:7). On her way to the final in Tashkent this season, Ms. Govortsova defeated Dutch Michaëlla Krajčiček (seeded 392nd) — 7:5, 2:6, 6:1 and Croatian Donna Vekić (62nd seed) — 7:6 (7:4), 6:3. In the quarterfinal, she defeated

Romanian Alexandra Cadanțu (71st) — 6:3, 6:2, and then her doubles partner in the semifinal, Luxembourg's Mandy Minella (132nd) — 6:2, 7:5.

Govortsova and Minella suffered a crushing loss to Hungarian-Kazakh duo Yaroslava Shvedova / Timea Babos in two sets in the women's doubles — 3:6, 3:6. However, in 2009 Ms. Govortsova won the women's doubles in Tashkent, partnering Belarusian Tatiana Puchek. Olga boasts seven other doubles victories at professional tournaments and her success in Tashkent now moves her from 113th to 84th seed.